



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 233

January Session, 2017

House Bill No. 7159

House of Representatives, March 27, 2017

The Committee on Education reported through REP. FLEISCHMANN of the 18th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT'S SEAL OF BILITERACY.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 10-5 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2017*):

3 (a) The Commissioner of Education shall, in accordance with this
4 section, issue a state high school diploma to any person (1) who
5 successfully completes an examination approved by the commissioner,
6 or (2) who (A) is seventeen years of age and has been officially
7 withdrawn from school in accordance with the provisions of section
8 10-184 or is eighteen years of age or older, and (B) presents to the
9 commissioner evidence demonstrating educational qualifications
10 which the commissioner deems equivalent to those required for
11 graduation from a public high school. Application for such a diploma
12 shall be made in the manner and form prescribed by the commissioner
13 provided, at the time of application to take the examination described
14 in subdivision (1) of this subsection, the applicant is seventeen years of
15 age or older, has been officially withdrawn from school, in accordance

16 with section 10-184, for at least six months and has been advised, in
17 such manner as may be prescribed by the commissioner, of the other
18 options for high school completion and other available educational
19 programs. For good cause shown, the commissioner may allow a
20 person who is sixteen years of age to apply to take the examination,
21 provided the commissioner may not issue a state high school diploma
22 to such person until the person has attained seventeen years of age.

23 (b) Application to take or retake the examination described in
24 subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section shall be accompanied
25 by a money order or certified check in the nonrefundable amount of
26 thirteen dollars. This amount shall include the fee for the state high
27 school diploma.

28 (c) No veteran, member of the armed forces, as defined in section
29 27-103, or any person under twenty-one years of age shall be required
30 to pay the fees described in subsection (b) of this section. The
31 commissioner may waive any fee described in subsection (b) upon the
32 submission of evidence indicating an inability to pay.

33 (d) The Commissioner of Education shall keep a correct account of
34 all money received under the provisions of this section and shall
35 deposit with the State Treasurer all such money received by said
36 commissioner. Funds paid to a local or regional board of education
37 under this section shall be deposited in the school activity fund
38 established under section 10-237 and expended to defray the costs of
39 such testing and related administration and information.

40 (e) The commissioner shall establish criteria by which an "honors
41 diploma" may be issued for exemplary performance on the
42 examination.

43 (f) Not later than September 1, 2017, the State Board of Education
44 shall establish criteria by which a local or regional board of education
45 may affix the Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy on a diploma
46 awarded to a student who has achieved a high level of proficiency in
47 English and one or more foreign languages. For purposes of this

48 subsection, "foreign language" means a world language other than
49 English and includes American Sign Language and any other language
50 spoken by a federally recognized Native American tribe.

51 Sec. 2. Section 10-221a of the general statutes is amended by adding
52 subsection (k) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2017*):

53 (NEW) (k) Commencing with classes graduating in 2018, and for
54 each graduating class thereafter, a local or regional board of education
55 may affix the Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy, as described in
56 subsection (f) of section 10-5, as amended by this act, to a diploma
57 awarded to a student who has achieved a high level of proficiency in
58 English and one or more foreign languages, as defined in said
59 subsection (f). The local or regional board of education shall include on
60 such student's transcript a designation that the student received the
61 Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2017</i>	10-5
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2017</i>	10-221a

ED *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note***State Impact:*** None***Municipal Impact:*** None***Explanation***

There is no cost associated with establishing criteria or affixing the Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy to high school diplomas, since the State Department of Education has staff with expertise in this area, and the change is procedural in nature.

The Out Years***State Impact:*** None***Municipal Impact:*** None

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 7159*****AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT'S SEAL OF BILITERACY.*****SUMMARY**

This bill requires the State Board of Education, by September 1, 2017, to establish criteria for awarding the Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy. The bill allows local and regional boards of education to affix this seal on a high school student's diploma to recognize high proficiency in English and at least one other foreign language, beginning with the graduating class of 2018. Under the bill, "foreign language" refers to a world language other than English, including American Sign Language and any language spoken by a federally recognized Native American tribe.

If such seal is awarded, the bill also requires boards to include a designation on recipient students' transcripts indicating that they received the seal, beginning with the graduating class of 2018.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2017

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 34 Nay 0 (03/08/2017)